Gay or straight? Your nose knows

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Powerful airborne chemicals emitted in male perspiration and associated with sexual reproduction trigger a heightened response in the brains of homosexual men similar to that seen in heterosexual women, researchers reported Monday.

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences: www.pnas.org

Heterosexual men did not share the brain response to the chemicals in male sweat, according to a team of brain imaging specialists from the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden.

The debate over whether homosexuality is a matter of choice or is inborn makes such re-

SEE **BRAIN SIGNALS** • PAGE 4

Gazette today May 10, 2005

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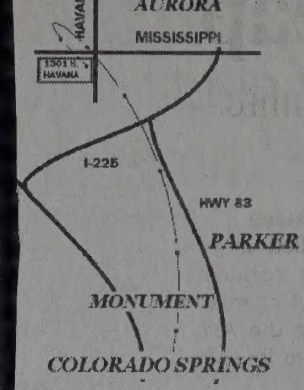

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BRAIN SIGNALS: Lesbian data on way

FROM PAGE 1

search extremely controversial, said team leader and neuroscientist Dr. Ivanka Savic of the institute's Center for Gender Related Medicine.

"I want to be extremely cautious — this study does not tell us anything about whether sexual orientation is hardwired in the brain. It doesn't say anything about that," Savic said.

"We're saying that we've detected measurable differences in the brains of homosexual men in regions that are known to mediate reproductive and sexual behavior."

The study was published in today's issue of Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The added issue of human pheromones — the existence of which has been demonstrated only indirectly, critics say — and any role they might play in sexual preference should add to the fray.

A leading pioneer in pheromone research, University of Chicago psychologist Martha McClintock, commended the team for its work.

"I found it really intriguing," she said. "This clearly shows that humans are processing these steroids and odors in a sexually specific way. It's another piece of evidence demonstrating that chemical signals — or chemosignals, I've dubbed them — play a significant role in human behavior."

The subjects of the study smelled various compounds, among them two odorless substances closely related to the hormones testosterone and estrogen, as the researchers conducted PET scans that measure blood flow in different regions of the brain.

The three groups — 12 homosexual males, 12 heterosexual men and 12 heterosexual women — responded to common odors such as lavender in a similar fashion, engaging only the regions of the brain that process smell.

But the brains reacted differently to other chemicals.

A compound known as EST, derived from the female sex hormone estrogen, increased blood flow in part of the hypothalamus in heterosexual men but not in heterosexual women.

Conversely, a testosterone-related substance known as AND lit up the brains of women and gay men, but not heterosexual men.

Savic said the results of the team's research on homosexual women are still being compiled.

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Bush paid tribute to the unparalleled sacrifice of the Russian people during World War II.

The Soviet people lost an estimated 27 million souls during World War II.

of Europeans traded one tyranny for another in 1945. But Putin bristled at that maneuver and rejected U.S. suggestions that he renounce the Soviet occupation of the Baltics.

Army revises rules for weapons safety

Accidental gunfire killed 16 troops since '01

USA TODAY

WASHINGTON • Sixteen U.S. troops have been killed and at least 121 wounded by accidental gunfire in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001, prompting the Army to dramatically toughen its safety training.

The Pentagon said many of the accidental shootings, which the military calls "negligent discharges," resulted from simple carelessness and a lack of rigorously taught safety habits.

Few of the accidental shootings in Iraq and Afghanistan were fatal. Defense Department figures show that 16 troops, including 14 in Iraq, were killed when troops inadvertently fired their weapons. That figure could rise, because 17 more deaths from "nonhostile" gunshot wounds are under investigation, the Pentagon said.

Injuries from accidental discharges were far more common: 121 in Iraq, said David Martin, a civilian who manages troop safety in Iraq. The Pentagon could not provide figures for accidental gunshot wounds in Afghanistan.

NEW OFFENSIVE: Three Marines die as troops storm western villages considered key to pacifying Iraq. **Page 5**

Statistics aren't available for all wars, but the number of incidents in the past three years seems smaller than in other wars, said Conrad Crane of the U.S. Army Military History Institute.

Still, the problem is serious enough for the Army to overhaul training and emphasize safety.

The Army has revised basic training to require recruits to carry their M-16 rifles everywhere — even to the bathroom — to become more familiar with safety procedures. The Army has also started teaching rifle marksmanship and weapons handling in the first few days of training instead of three weeks into boot camp.

The procedures are intended to compensate for thousands of young soldiers who are being thrust into combat as soon as one month after completing basic and advanced training, said Col. Kevin Shwedo, a senior Army training supervisor at Fort Monroe, Va.

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